

*This Week in Washington*



WITH CONGRESSMAN  
JO BONNER

### War Supplemental that Misses the Point

Supplemental appropriations bills are a means by which Congress provides additional funding for emergency spending for programs and activities that are considered too urgent to wait until next year's budget.

Since the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Congress has passed supplemental appropriations bills each year to fund the war on terror and our military operations in support of that effort.

The 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act, H.R. 2346, passed the House last month – with my support – by a vote of 368-60. However, after the bill went to conference committee to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions, it emerged drastically different from the original bill that passed with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Regretfully, the House Democratic leadership actually cut \$4.6 billion in defense funding from the war supplemental that was included in the original House-passed version.

And incredibly, \$5 billion for the International Monetary Fund, which will be used to secure \$108 billion in loans, was added to the spending bill that was originally intended to support our military operations – almost \$30 billion more than was included for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. These dollars will eventually go to the governments of many countries that are not friends of the United States.

Spending \$5 billion to bail out foreign countries on the backs of our military is inexcusable. An emergency war funding bill should not advance even more wasteful spending and more bailouts from Washington.

I was also troubled that this legislation eliminated a provision – a provision that both the House and Senate overwhelmingly supported – which would have prevented the release of detainee interrogation photos that would only serve to further incite our enemies.

General David Petraeus, Commander of U.S. forces throughout the Middle East recently said, “The release of images depicting U.S. servicemen mistreating detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan, or that could be construed as depicting mistreatment, would likely deal a particularly hard blow to USCENTCOM and U.S. interagency counterinsurgency efforts in these three key nations, as well as further endanger the lives of U.S. soldiers, Marines, Airmen,

Sailors, civilians, and contractors presently serving there.”

Our men and women in uniform deserve a funding bill that provides all the tools they need for success in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### Jobs Created with Dry-Dock ALABAMA Waiver

I was, however, pleased that the bill contained a provision that will keep or create 350 U.S. shipyard jobs without appropriating a single dollar.

Atlantic Marine owns the dry-dock ALABAMA, which is a piece of floating construction equipment used to raise and lower ships.

The ALABAMA has been moored at Atlantic Marine’s Mobile facility for over 15 years, after it was purchased from another U.S. shipyard that acquired it over a quarter of a century ago from a foreign manufacturer.

Atlantic Marine's Mobile shipyard is currently constructing three ships for a Texas-based customer. Federal law requires all "vessels" that move from one point in the U.S. to another to be built in the U.S., as well as crewed and owned by U.S. citizens.

To safely launch these ships, Atlantic Marine must move the ship on to the dry-dock ALABAMA.

The dry-dock containing the newly-constructed ship must then be shifted less than 100 yards to an adjacent pier within the shipyard to launch the ship.

Unfortunately, an official with the Customs and Border Patrol recently determined that this incidental movement of a foreign-built dry-dock within the shipyard violates federal law, leaving the shipyard without a viable method of launching the ships (there is no other dry-dock available for rent on the entire Gulf Coast that is capable of launching a tanker of this size).

It is debatable whether a dry-dock is a "vessel," and the bureaucratic determination of moving the dry-dock from one pier in a shipyard to another pier in the same shipyard constitutes two points in the U.S. is questionable.

Fortunately, this waiver will keep or create 350 shipyard jobs and the newly constructed ships (once launched) will be crewed by 225 U.S. merchant mariners, all without any cost to the taxpayer.

## Alabama Continues Working to Recruit Aerospace Jobs

In an effort to continue building on the Southeast's growing aerospace presence, last weekend I attended the world's largest aerospace and trade show – the Paris Air Show.

I joined Governor Bob Riley, Senator Richard Shelby, Mayor Sam Jones – as well as other elected officials and business leaders from Mobile – at the 100th Anniversary of the Paris Show in a series of back-to-back meetings.

This trans-Atlantic economic development mission was an excellent opportunity for the Alabama delegation to sell our home state to the world.

Two things were very apparent throughout the trip. First, the global economy has had a major impact on the sales of both defense systems as well as commercial aviation; however, there seemed to be a renewed sense of confidence that the industry as a whole remains hopeful that the current economic downturn won't last much longer.

And secondly, the word is out – the Gulf Coast and the state of Alabama is a good place to locate aerospace and defense plants.

While we obviously would have preferred to make this trip with the assembly of Northrop Grumman/EADS tankers well underway in Mobile, the fact remains there are indeed a wide range of companies seeking to do business in Alabama, many of which are associated with the tanker program. We can't wait to get started.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

*For release the week of Monday, June 22, 2009. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.*